

had introduced gives the executive branch the authority to fully reimburse the State's Medicaid share it would otherwise have to pay for out-of-state evacuees.

For every evacuee, that is a resident of Texas who cannot afford to be put on Medicaid now, who must survive without health coverage. That is not acceptable. This is a national disaster and a national public health emergency, so the Federal Government should bear the responsibility.

On the plus side, I am pleased to see the announcement by Secretary Leavitt freeing up funding for the four new federally qualified health centers that were scheduled to receive funding in December. While this funding will be a big help, it does mean that we will have to serve more people for a longer period of time than expected. HHS should have the ability to reimburse federally qualified health clinics' costs for serving the uninsured evacuees.

In addition to housing and medical care, childhood education is also a concern. Our local schools have taken thousands of students impacted by Hurricane Katrina, seven school districts that provide education in my own congressional district of Houston. They have taken over 5,000 students in the last week, and we see more students coming every day.

Even though our schools are already at capacity, we are meeting the challenge of educating the children in the gulf coast impacted by Hurricane Katrina. Estimates by the State show this may cost Texas over \$450 million to serve the children that have come to Texas. Currently, FEMA will offer some assistance for these costs, and the Department of Education is unsure of what assistance they can grant. This issue is calling out for a solution by Congress, and we must step up.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot say enough about the efforts of our Mayor White and County Judge Eckels in Houston; but more importantly, their leadership has been more than matched by the efforts of government workers and individual volunteers on the ground. As a result, Houston is showing its best side to the Nation. And I am proud to be part of our relief effort, but our effort is unsustainable without Federal financial assistance.

Hurricane Katrina has devastated Mississippi, Louisiana, and Alabama. The ability of our local governments to provide vital services is now at risk of devastation as well. We need Federal help in this natural and national disaster.

ANNOUNCING THE AMERICAN PARITY ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EMANUEL) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, the clean-up efforts along the gulf coast are now fully under way. The flood wa-

ters of New Orleans are receding, and we are shifting our focus from saving lives to restoring lives.

In the past 2 weeks, Congress has allocated a little over \$60 billion in disaster relief. It is the right thing to do; yet some here in Washington have questioned whether it is money well spent. Others even question whether we should rebuild New Orleans at all. And even after witnessing the horrors of Katrina's aftermath, some say they want to proceed with the tax cut for the wealthiest 1 percent in this country, all the while cutting Medicaid, educational programs, and environmental programs.

Ironically, many of these are the same individuals who have vocally and unequivocally supported aid and the funding requests for rebuilding Iraq. We should be responsible with the people's tax dollars; but we cannot have two sets of books, two sets of priorities, one for the United States and for Iraq.

Here is what we need to do to begin to restore the lives of the people in New Orleans and the rest of the gulf coast:

These Americans need health care, housing, education, clean water. And yet what is the President's budget for this year? A \$60 billion cut in Medicaid, a \$4.3 billion cut in educational programs, a \$1.6 billion cut to police and firefighters, a \$330 million cut to the Army Corps of Engineers, a \$450 million cut to the Environmental Protection Agency.

So the very initiatives that we need right now to help New Orleans and the rest of the folks on the gulf coast are the ones that the President's budget sought to cut back dramatically, and in some cases even eliminate entirely.

At the same time they want to do this, we are spending billions of dollars rebuilding Iraq in the very same areas of education, housing, health care. Here is a listing of Iraq reconstruction projects according to USAID: 2,500 schools have been rehabilitated; 32,000 teachers and administrators have been trained; over the next year up to 100,000 additional teachers will receive in-service training; 84 primary and secondary schools have been established as centers of excellence; we are provided universal health care for every Iraqi; 110 primary health care centers have been renovated; 10 water treatment facilities have been constructed; the Sweet Water Canal System was rebuilt, including the repair of breaches and the levee system; wetlands are being restored; ports are being rebuilt; and the entire transportation program is undergoing a massive renovation and construction program. All the while some are questioning whether we should do this for New Orleans in our backyard.

All the while the President's budget called for cuts in these very areas that we are now spending, appropriately in some cases, for Iraq.

Let me be clear, I am not against spending this money to help restore

the people's lives in Iraq. But we have a budget that was passed with opposition from Democrats to cut educational spending, cut Medicaid spending, cut health care spending, cut education spending, environmental clean-up.

In the coming weeks, I plan on introducing a piece of legislation to ensure that every dollar we spend in helping Iraq restore the communities, help restore the lives of the people there we will spend here in the United States, because we need to do that for New Orleans, we need to do that for the rest of America. But we cannot have two priorities, two sets of books, two sets of values, one for Iraq and one for the rest of America. Those are the wrong values.

Mr. Speaker, the American people are the most generous people in the world. We can do both. We can build America and Iraq. And it is important and imperative that as Americans remain the most generous people in the world, that they cannot think that their kids have less of a future than other countries around the world.

We need to ensure that we invest in America, that the roads and the bridges and the health care and the education and the environmental protection that we have on the laws, that we are investing in those areas. If anything, the horrors in the aftermath of Katrina showed us that America needs today to stand as one, to be invested in as one, that those communities need the same assistance. We cannot pass this budget that calls for cutbacks in the Corps of Engineers, cutbacks of \$60 billion in health care, cutbacks in community health care, all the while singing our own praises about the 3,200 schools we are building in Iraq, the teachers we are training, the universal health care we are providing.

Again, I will remind you, I am not against providing those. I am against the cuts in areas, in the very areas, that we are advocating and investing in in Iraq, cuts in those areas for America. This is the time when the country looks to its fellow citizens, to the government to ensure that they can both restore communities, restore lives, and rebuild those communities.

We need to invest in that area, and like the rest of America, build in America and make sure America stands strong going into the future. It is high time as we talk about our investment in Iraq, which is now close to \$350 billion, that that investment in Iraq, that we look here at home and say, what do we need to do in the areas of health care, education, schools, environmental protection. Because if we build Iraq, we have got to ensure that America stands strong.

METHAMPHETAMINE CRISIS IN AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. OSBORNE) is recognized for

60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. OSBORNE. Mr. Speaker, I was privileged to hear British Prime Minister Tony Blair speak in this Chamber some time ago, and one comment he made particularly caught my attention, and this is what he said. He said, "As Britain knows, all predominant power seems for a time invincible but, in fact, it is transitory."

I believe he was referring to the fact that nothing lasts forever, particularly in regards to civilizations; nations eventually decline and they fall. History teaches that most of the world's great powers are not overcome by external force, but rather disintegrate internally. Let us examine three such cases.

First of all, you might hearken back to Rome 2,000 years ago. It ruled the entire civilized world. At that time it appeared to be invincible, and eventually it fell from preeminence; and the reasons that historians give for Rome's fall, and I am abbreviating somewhat, was a general decline in morality, increasing corruption and instability in leadership, and increasing public addiction to ever more violent public spectacles. And all of us, I think, can remember some of the stories about the Roman mob and their insatiable desire to be entertained, an increase in crime and prostitution, a populace that became more self-absorbed, apathetic and unwilling to sacrifice for the common good.

The second case would be that of Great Britain itself, which maybe Tony Blair was referring to.

□ 2000

Certainly, Great Britain has not gone into tremendous decline, but it was once a global power and was certainly the strongest, most predominant nation in the world for a period of 100, 150 years, and of course, that has changed. That empire slowly crumbled during the mid-1800s, and the reasons given for that decline were, A, that they lost national resolve to maintain their territory. It was far flung; and, of course, it was very difficult to maintain all of those colonies. The values that led to ascendancy were eventually eroded, and spiritual underpinnings certainly shifted in the country.

A third example would be that of Russia; and, of course, Russia, up until just 20, 25 years ago, was one of the world's two great superpowers. In a matter of months, Russia disintegrated before our very eyes. It was startling how quickly it happened.

Alexander Solzhenitsyn reflected on this fall when he observed, and this is what he said, Over a half century ago, while I was still a child, I recall a number of older people offering the following explanation for the great disasters that had befallen Russia, and he quoted them. He said, Men have forgotten God; that is why all of this has happened.

Marx and Lenin over time had dismantled Russia's religious heritage. Its

value system and Russia's foundation, even though it did well for a period of 60, 70 years, was fundamentally flawed. Eventually, Russia collapsed like a house of cards with nothing to sustain it.

There was some common themes on these historical collapses. Number one, the people became less willing to sacrifice for others and for their country; citizens became more self-absorbed; greater desire for the State to provide for them; weakening of commonly-held values; and, generally, a decline in spiritual commitment.

What does all this have to do with the United States and our present situation? We have the most powerful military, the strongest economy, the most stable government of any nation in the world at the present time. It is very easy to think that we are invincible, but I would like to remind those who are watching that, as Tony Blair stated, as Britain knows, all predominant power for a time seems invincible, but, in fact, it is transitory.

The reason I am speaking tonight, Mr. Speaker, is that my experience over a considerable time of working with young people, 36 years in the coaching profession, I witnessed some things that were somewhat disturbing and somewhat concerning. The young men that I worked with were more talented each year; and yet they showed more signs of stress, more personal struggles, less moral clarity. They were more troubled as time went on, and I think some of this struggle can be reflected on the chart that we see here.

What this indicates is the juvenile court caseload from roughly 1960 up until about 2000, and we see the trend line is ever upward, and the caseload went up by 400 percent. Obviously, something was going on with our young people during that period of time.

Some of the things that I witnessed that I think were contributing to this issue was the fact that, number one, there were changes in the family. The family is the basic social unit in our culture. In 1960, the out-of-wedlock birth rate was 5 percent. Today, it hovers at around 33 percent, an increase of 600 percent over those years of roughly 45 years.

In 1960, the great majority of children lived with both of their parents. Today, nearly one-half of our young people grow up without both biological parents. Roughly one-half of our young people have endured some type of significant trauma in their lives early on, and sometimes this leaves some scars that are irreparable.

Only 7 percent of today's families are traditional families, meaning that we have both a father and a mother and one parent or the other, usually the mother but sometimes the father, is at home full-time. In our culture today, oftentimes after 3 p.m. there is nobody home. The traditional family is no longer traditional anymore.

Parents today spend 40 percent less time with their children than they did a generation ago. The divorce rate has increased roughly 300 percent since 1960, and 24 million children live without their biological father. If your father bails out on you, sometimes even before he has even seen you or even knows you, it leaves some scars, and these wounds are difficult to heal; you are always trying to fill that psyche with all the wrong things. Fatherless children are more likely to be abused, more likely to have mental and emotional problems. They are more likely to abuse drugs and alcohol, commit suicide, commit a crime and be promiscuous.

A greeting card company a few years ago had an experiment. It was Mother's Day, and they went to a prison. They said, we will offer a free Mother's Day card for any prisoner who would like to have one and would like to write to his mother. They had just about 100 percent takers. Almost every prisoner got a card and sent it to his mother, and so they were somewhat encouraged by that success. They decided they would try the same thing on Father's Day. The interesting thing was, as they offered those cards, they had not one taker in that whole prison. That indicates the power of fatherlessness and the fact that it is so prevalent and the damage that it does to so many of our young people.

The family certainly in our culture still has some strength, but it is not as stable overall as it was 30, 40 years ago. We have taken these young people with a launching pad, the family has maybe not broken but it is cracked to some degree, and we thrust them into an environment that has changed dramatically over the years.

In 1960, drug abuse was almost unheard of. I remember when I first started coaching I think I had heard of marijuana. I had never known of anyone that had used it. Methamphetamine was something I had never heard of. Cocaine I had never heard of. Heroin was something that was maybe used in Eastern countries, but, again, I had never seen it. Things have changed certainly in our culture.

Alcohol abuse involving underage drinkers has certainly exploded, and there is a developmental aspect to underage drinking that many people in our culture are just beginning to discover. I think I can show you rather graphically here an example of how this works.

This is a brain scan of two 15-year olds. The one on the left is someone who does not use alcohol. The brain scan on the right is a 15-year old binge drinker, someone who drinks regularly at a very young age. They were both sober at the time they were given a math problem to solve; and, as they worked on the problem, a brain scan was taken. You can see here the brain cells that are firing in this brain. You know there is certainly a good deal of cognitive activity that is occurring;

and, on the other hand, in the brain of the binge drinker we see a rather graphic difference.

Many of our young people are starting to use alcohol at age 11, 12, 13, 14; and it is a whole different ball game when you start using it at that early age than if you start drinking when you are 21, 22, 23 because of the developmental aspect. This is something that many people in our culture do not realize. Many high school dropouts, many people who are doing very poorly in school, very poor academic performance are related in many ways to underage drinking and alcohol consumption at an early age.

A National Academy of Science study shows that alcohol kills roughly 6½ times more children than all other drugs combined; 6½ times more is due to alcohol abuse. Alcohol and underage drinking costs the United States \$53 billion annually. In my home State of Nebraska, that figure is roughly \$435 million a year, according to a Pacific Institute study that was done in 2001.

We have roughly 3 million teenage alcoholics in our country today; and, obviously, this is by far our biggest drug problem. The alarming thing that has happened is we have seen a tremendous increase in alcoholism and drinking problems on the part of young women. At one time, most of the drinking problem was centered in young men; and now we find that young women are drinking as much and, in some cases, even more than young men.

We also find that young people tend to binge drink. They drink to get drunk. They, on the average, will consume twice as much alcohol at a sitting as an adult will. Of course, this leads to all kinds of problems. Twenty percent of our eighth graders drink regularly, and children who drink before age 15, and the average young person who starts to drink does start drinking before age 15, is four times more likely to become an alcoholic than someone who starts using alcohol at age 21. Certainly, early alcohol usage leads directly to marijuana, cocaine, methamphetamine, ecstasy and so on.

The other thing that is of some concern, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that we inundate our young people with alcohol advertising. Our young people see 96 ads promoting alcohol use, oftentimes with young people in the advertising itself, 96 ads for every one that they see that might discourage underage drinking. The predominant attitude in this country is that underage drinking is something that is reasonably acceptable. We have not done a good job of advertising and trying to alleviate this problem.

Hundreds of millions of dollars are spent to fight drug production in Afghanistan, in Colombia, around the world; and a fraction of that money that would be spent on underage drinking would be much more cost-effective because we spend very, very little in that regard.

We have got a bill here in Congress called the Stop Underage Drinking Act, which we think will be very helpful. It would provide \$51 million on a national advertising campaign, much like we have used to try to curb tobacco use on the part of young people. We think this would be very helpful.

Anyway, we have obviously got a problem with underage drinking, and the next issue is something I would like to visit about a little bit, and that is a problem that is threatening to overcome and overwhelm our country.

In 1990, these two red States, Texas and California, each had 20 meth labs. All the rest of the States did not have that many. Methamphetamine was a problem primarily in Texas and California in 1990. Then we see the change that begins to occur. By 1998, in 8 years, we see that about 50 percent, or a little bit more of the country, was now subject to a great many methamphetamine labs. Certainly, meth labs are not only the indicator. Because maybe 80 percent, 70 percent of meth that comes into our country comes from superlabs, mostly from down in Mexico, but the existence of these labs shows the scope and the influence of methamphetamine.

More recently, in 2004, we now see that almost every State, with the exception of just a few States in the Northeast, had at least 20 meth labs or more. Some of these, for instance, Missouri, I believe, had something like 2,700 meth labs, Iowa had 1,300, Nebraska had 300, Oklahoma had several hundred, and on and on and on.

This has become a very, very powerful, very addictive drug that is really affecting our whole population but particularly our young people.

This series of pictures here shows rather graphically the influence of methamphetamine. This was a young woman who was first arrested, and her family gave these pictures to authorities hoping that they would be shown, and she was arrested every year for a period of 10 years. Here she may have been around 30 years of age, fairly attractive, very young, and you see the changes each successive year. Then it looks like maybe about here she may have begun to inject methamphetamine because you see a rather marked change in her appearance. This is the final picture in the 10th year, and this picture was taken in the morgue. She lasted 10 years, which many people do not.

□ 2015

It is very graphic, but it shows the devastating effect of methamphetamine and what it is doing to our population.

So I present this, Mr. Speaker, by way of simply indicating that there are some things in our culture that are disturbing, some things that we certainly need to address as directly as we can.

One thing we are really concerned about is that the Byrne funding, which helps fight methamphetamine at the

local level, has been drastically reduced. We cut it in half this year in the House. This was done primarily because of budget cuts, and this is absolutely something that cannot be ignored. This problem must be addressed, and we are hoping that that funding might be restored as we go to conference with the Senate, because they have included many of these funds.

We also find that the United States is a very violent Nation, currently the most violent Nation in the world for young people. We have the highest homicide rate, the highest teen suicide rate, and the most assaults. So rather a difficult, discouraging picture as far as some of our young people.

Also, pornography has exploded. I remember Senator Jim Exon from Nebraska, when the Internet was first coming into its prominence, began to think about the fact that pornography could be a major problem on the Internet; and he introduced legislation in the Senate to try to control the effect of pornography on the Internet. I remember some people laughed at his efforts. Some people made fun of him at the time. But he obviously was ahead of his time, because at the present time there are over 1 million porn sites on the Internet. Not 100,000, not 1,000, but 1 million. So nine out of 10 children ages 9 to 16 have viewed pornography on the Internet, and most of this viewing has been unintentional. They have simply run into it. This was according to a study done by the London School of Economics in January of 2002.

Some of our leading corporations, such as AT&T, have been involved in the marketing of hard-core pornography. At one time AT&T was kind of the gold standard as far as our corporate clients were concerned. I am not sure they are still doing this, but there was a time where they actually were doing some marketing of this type of pornography.

Search words on the Internet, such as Barbie, Disney, ESPN, and even at one time my name, if a young person was going to do a research article on his Congressman and looked up my name, it brought up a porn site. So this shows the pernicious effect and the somewhat deviant attitude of some people in that business, because these are all search words that are very innocent, and a young person would have no way of knowing when they type those words in that they would see something of a hard-core pornographic nature.

A poll in 2004 found that 82 percent of adult Americans surveyed said that the Federal laws against Internet obscenity should be vigorously enforced. And I think most Americans would agree they are really concerned about what is happening. There are some safeguards; but they are very, very difficult sometimes to implement.

Video games have certainly been a problem as well. Eight- to 18-year-old young people average 40 minutes per day playing video games; and of course some of these video games, not all of

them, some are very good and some are wholesome, but they have become increasingly more violent. Some teach stalking and killing of victims similar to military training video games. In one, Grand Theft Auto San Andreas, a person who does a particularly good job of shooting people is rewarded by pornography.

Now, fortunately, some stores voluntarily began to pull this off the shelves, but the rating system that is currently used by the video games is so flawed that a parent has almost no way of knowing when they purchase that game exactly what they are getting for their young person. And many parents, unfortunately, do not sit there and watch exactly what is going on in those games, because embedded in them sometimes is some very pernicious material.

Some of the music, some television, many movies are very graphic; and certainly that content would have been impossible to present 20 or 30 years ago in our country. It simply would not have been tolerated. So I am concerned because I have some grandchildren ages 6 through 12, and many people I think are concerned about their children.

So, number one, the family has certainly changed. It is less stable. The environment is more hostile that we thrust these young people into. And, third, the value system in our country seems to have shifted.

Many people are aware of Stephen Covey's book "The 7 Habits of Highly Successful People." In the early parts of that book, he did a survey of the literature that had to do with success, since he was writing a book about success. He surveyed all the literature in the history of our Nation that had to do with success, and what he found was something that was rather interesting. He said during the first 150-odd years of our Nation's history success was defined primarily in terms of character traits. A successful person was honest. A successful person was trustworthy. A successful person was hard working. A successful person was generous, and on and on and on.

Then he said about 50 or 60 years ago a definite shift began to appear in the literature, and success was no longer defined in terms of character traits, but success began to be defined primarily in terms of financial acumen. If you had a lot of wealth, you were considered successful. If you had celebrity and people wanted to be around you and wanted your autograph, you were successful. If you had power, you were successful. So you may not have had very good character; but if you had those other things, you were defined as being successful.

So there was a definite shift in terms of what we saw as being valued in terms of our value system. So it is no wonder that young people are somewhat confused as they encounter all of these things that are facing them.

We have also certainly in our culture seen a breakdown of integrity in the

business community to some degree; in athletics; even some people in the press have not behaved well; in the church; in politics. In all segments of our society there are those who have not behaved in ways that are very admirable. So the predominant world view today, and certainly that on the college campus, is something called post-modernism.

Now, post-modernism basically adheres to the idea that there are no moral absolutes. There is no absolute truth. And therefore what is true for you may not be true for me, or may not be true for somebody else. So we kind of define our own sense of right or wrong. So adultery, murder, even child abuse may not be absolutely wrong. There may be circumstances where this can be approved and understood. The only absolute wrong according to post-modernism is if you declare that something is absolutely wrong, then I guess that would be absolutely wrong, because there are no moral absolutes.

So in view of the family breakdown, a decline of the culture and shifting of values, it is an extremely difficult time for our children. We are asking them to weave their way through a mine field littered with alcohol, drug abuse, harmful video games, some music, television and movies that are not very wholesome, promiscuity, gangs, violent behavior, and broken homes. And we are asking most of them to weave their way through with less parental guidance and an ever-shifting value system.

So I have been rather hard, I guess, on some aspects of our culture; yet I do not want to leave this without talking about some of the things that we might begin to be proud of as well. D'Toqueville, the Frenchman who came here and examined our culture about a century ago, said this: "America is great because America is good." And we have seen some of that with Hurricane Katrina. We have seen an outpouring. We saw it when the Twin Towers came down. We have seen it with the tsunami. So we still are a generous, caring people. There are many great things about America, but there are some things we certainly need to look at.

So D'Toqueville wrote this 200 years ago, and I guess the question is, are his observations still true today. I think to some degree they are, but there are still some disturbing signs of change, and those are the things I have tried to enumerate.

So the question is, what can be done? We do have some difficult situations, particularly involving our young people; and so one thing that appears to me to work very well is mentoring, which is something I have been really interested in, my wife and I both. Basically, mentoring is simply providing an adult who, number one, cares in the life of a young person.

I will tell you a quick story. We had a mentor in Omaha, Nebraska, who had a young man who was his mentee. And the young man, who was 14 at the time,

had a cerebral hemorrhage and was partially paralyzed. At that time, I think many mentors would have said, well, I probably need to find another mentee because the young man was not able to go to school, was not able to speak very well, and could not move around. But what this mentor did was he stayed with that young man. He even drove him daily, for a period of time, 60 miles to get rehabilitation. And, basically, through the efforts of that mentor, this young man today is going to school and will graduate from school and is doing well.

So a mentor is someone who cares and someone who cares in a way that is consistent. There is a commitment there that goes beyond a warm and fuzzy feeling.

The second thing that a mentor does is a mentor affirms a young person. As a coach, I saw that so clearly. If you told a young person that you were not sure he could play for you, that you were not sure he had a future, it would not be long before he would begin to play down to that expectation and often would not stay with it. On the other hand, if you told him you believed in him, you thought he was going to be a great player, that he had a future, oftentimes he would grow into that which he did not even know he was capable of becoming.

I remember in 1994, we had a great quarterback named Tommy Fraser who went down with an injury. And the young man who was number two on the depth chart, was from a small school in western Kansas. He had athletic talent. He had not had great success on his football team in high school. His team had not done all that well. They had been okay. And all of a sudden he was going to be thrust into this situation. I remember we told him, Brook, we believe in you. We think you will be a great player. Brook grew before our very eyes and took us to an undefeated season.

So affirmation is critical, and it is something that a mentor can provide. Because so many young people in our culture today simply do not have anyone who says to them on a regular basis, you know, way to go, I believe in you, or I know you can do this, or you can do it. So affirmation is critical.

The last thing I think a mentor does, and of course there are many things they can do, but one thing that is important is to provide a vision. So many of our young people today have really not witnessed somebody in their immediate vicinity or in their immediate life who gets up and maybe goes to work every day, or someone who has graduated from high school, and certainly not one who has gone to college.

I will tell you a story about a young man who lived out in western Nebraska about 1895, and this young guy was the son of a Civil War veteran. The Civil War veteran had a drinking problem, and he had four children. He had a very little homestead, and the future did not look very good. There was a traveling preacher out there that got hold

of this young guy and saw something in him that he liked, and he began to affirm him and he began to say, you know, I think you could go to college.

Now, the odds of that young man going to college were probably one in a thousand from that circumstance at that particular time in history. And on top of that, he said, I think you could be a great preacher. He said I think you have a real future. So lo and behold, this young guy began to believe it and began to accept that vision, and he got on a train and went about 300 miles and went to college and played football and became a preacher, and a very distinguished preacher.

Now, the reason that that was so interesting was that that guy, that person who mentored him, who began to provide that vision made a huge difference in that person's life, and that person was my grandfather. I am sure that my life is different today because of the influence of that itinerant preacher on my grandfather. So mentoring has a ripple effect. It affects one generation and then the next generation and the next. So there is an eternal quality about investing in the life of another person.

□ 2030

Mentoring does work. It reduces dropout rates, drug and alcohol abuse, teenage pregnancy, violence, absenteeism from school; and it improves graduation rates and also improves relationships between peers and the relationship between the mentored child and parents. So it is a win-win situation.

Congress has provided \$184 million over the past 5 years for mentoring of young people which has reached hundreds of thousands of young people around the country. This is a good thing, and we think this is something that is certainly appropriate for Congress to do. But, right now, we have roughly 18 million children in our country who badly need a mentor; and yet we have only about 2 to 2.5 million actually being mentored. So only one out of nine children who needs a mentor has one.

We feel America is great, America is good, but we have so many retired people, so many people who could spare one or two hours a week to make a difference in the life of a young person. We really need to grasp hold of this idea of mentoring.

In addition to mentoring, something that can be done certainly is legislation. I think that the Congress, particularly this House, in many cases has attempted to address some of the ills that are befalling our young people. Certainly some of the problems that we are seeing with gambling on the Internet is something that this House has attempted to deal with, with very limited success.

A piece of legislation that I have been involved with with the gentleman from California (Mr. BACA), the Software Accuracy and Fraud Evaluation

Rating Act, or SAFE Rating Act, is an important piece of legislation because it would require the Federal Trade Commission to study the voluntary rating system of the video game system to determine if its practices are unfair or deceptive.

There is no question that video games currently are not being accurately rated and in many cases are very misleading. So we think that this is a piece of legislation that could be addressed and would make a difference.

Another thing that certainly could help our culture at the present time is a fundamental shift in many of the court decisions regarding the first amendment. I do not mean to imply that the first amendment is not important, that the first amendment should not be upheld, but some of the interpretations that have revolved around the first amendment have led our Nation in a direction that may not be the way our Founders originally thought it should go. I will show a chart that depicts some of these court decisions.

We can see in 1997 the Supreme Court ruled that indecent speech is protected by the first amendment and overturned the Communications Decency Act. This was a bill passed by Congress regarding indecent speech, and the Supreme Court basically ruled that indecent speech is protected by the first amendment. This was a fairly important decision.

In 1998, the Supreme Court refused to rule decisively on the Child Online Protection Act, thereby allowing the legislation to remain law while preventing it from taking effect. This particular bill provided protection against obscenity on the Internet, and yet it was never enacted into law because of the Supreme Court ruling.

In 2002, the Supreme Court overturned the Child Pornography Prevention Act, ruling that child pornography must involve minors engaged in sexual activity to meet the legal definition of obscenity to lose first amendment protection. So what this means is if there was a cyber simulation of child pornography, that it was legal. Of course, it is impossible to distinguish if something is done well using electronic means, whether they are using actual children or not. So this was a blow to the people trying to control indecency on the Internet.

And, in 2002, a three-judge Federal court declared the Children Internet Protection Act requirement that all schools and libraries receiving Federal funds use Internet filtering material to protect minors from harmful materials on the Internet unconstitutional. So even in a public funded library children are not necessarily protected from obscenity.

All of these things would lead one to believe that certainly some of the court rules have not been friendly toward our young people, particularly with regard to the issues of pornography.

Some people say pornography is not really a problem because it is harmless,

it does not really hurt anybody, and it does not really affect anything. But if Members think about it, we spend billions and billions of dollars on advertising. If that advertising did not change behavior, I am sure that money would not be spent. Advertising absolutely does change behavior. What you see, think and read about changes the way you perceive things and the way you act.

That is true very much also with pornography. As a result, we have a great many women and children in our country who are suffering because of this and because of the fact that we have been either unwilling or unable to control something that we think has been very pernicious in our society.

The other thing that I would like to visit about briefly tonight is the issue of school prayer. I am not somebody that is off the charts in this regard. I certainly do not believe that a teacher should be allowed to proselytize in the classroom. I do not believe that the principal should get on the intercom every morning and lead a prayer, but I would say that the pendulum has swung awfully far.

In 1962, the Supreme Court ruled the following prayer unconstitutional, and this is what the prayer was.

"Almighty God, we acknowledge our dependence on Thee, and we beg Thy blessings upon us, our parents, our teachers and our country."

This is fairly innocuous. It does not seem terribly threatening, and yet I can see where possibly this is something that the court would get involved with, and they did rule this unconstitutional, and that started the ball rolling down the hill.

So it would appear that many of the court rulings have been contrary to the thinking of many of our Founding Fathers. Benjamin Franklin said, "We have been assured, Sir, in the sacred writings that except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it. I firmly believe this. I also believe that without His concurring aid, we shall succeed in the political building no better than the builders of Babel; we shall be divided by our little, partial local interests; our projects will be confounded; and we ourselves shall become a reproach and a byword down to future ages.

"I therefore beg leave to move that, henceforth, prayers imploring the assistance of Heaven and its blessing on our deliberation be held in this assembly every morning before we proceed to business."

Because of Franklin's speech in this Chamber, of course, this Chamber has been built since Franklin, but in the House and in the Congress every morning there are prayers that are held. Yet we are really restricting prayer in so many other arenas.

George Washington said, "The propitious smiles of Heaven can never be expected on a Nation that disregards the internal rules of order and right which Heaven itself has ordained."

David Barton said, "Franklin had warned that 'forgetting God' and imagining that we no longer needed his 'concurring aid' would result in internal disputes that decay the Nation's prestige and reputation, and a diminished national success. Washington had warned that if religious principles were excluded, the Nation's morality and political prosperity would suffer. Yet despite such clear words, in cases beginning in 1962, the court offered rulings which eventually divorced the Nation, its schools and its public affairs from more than three centuries of its heritage; America is now learning experientially what both Washington and Franklin knew to be true; we are suffering in the very areas that they predicted."

Barton's warnings may be somewhat dire, but I do believe there is something to what he says. We certainly have disregarded some of the warnings of the early framers of the Constitution, and we have strayed far afield from what the original intent of those who wrote the Constitution appeared to be.

So despite the fact that the Constitution does not contain a separation of church and State clause, that phrase is not in the Constitution, in 1992 the Supreme Court declared an invocation and benediction at a graduation ceremony unconstitutional. So at a graduation ceremony you could not have an opening prayer or a benediction. Of course, as I said earlier, we begin the legislative day in this House with prayer every day.

The court held that a minute of silence in a school was unconstitutional. This seems a little bit beyond the pale to me that students could not have a minute of silence. They could think about history, they could pray, look out the window, but this was ruled as unconstitutional.

The court also ruled that a student-led prayer at a football game was unconstitutional. This was a prayer that the students had voted to have, and it was led by a student, it was outside the school building, and yet the court said the football players had to be there and the cheerleaders had to be there, and they might hear a prayer that was offensive to them. Therefore, you could not have a prayer. Again, that seems a little bit far afield.

As many of us know, the words "under God" were struck from the Pledge of Allegiance by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, and that was thrown out by the Supreme Court because they said the parent bringing the case had no legal standing. In other words, the father was not the legal guardian of the young woman, the young girl that he was providing in the case. So the court did not rule it out. They did not throw out the ruling by the Ninth Circuit based on its merits but rather because of no legal standing, and I am sure we will see that reintroduced in the court again in some fairly recent date.

The Constitution is increasingly being interpreted as a "living document" and legal decisions increasingly come down based not on what the law states but rather based upon the personal ideology of the jurist. So the philosophical bent of the Supreme Court justices and district court justices determines very largely the course of this Nation in many important areas.

So we are now faced with the confirmation of Judge Roberts, and it is a very serious business. And we have one other vacancy on the Supreme Court, the first time in a long time we have had a situation like this. The direction that the court goes is going to be very important.

I know of nothing personally regarding Judge Roberts that would lead me to believe that he would not try to be a strict constructionist, that he would not try to interpret the Constitution as it is written, and I do not believe he would be a biased person. I am sure there would be those that disagree, but these are critical sometimes, Mr. Speaker, and these decisions will be very important.

So the makeup of the courts and the will of Congress will greatly influence whether we continue to drift further from our heritage or draw closer to those values upon which our Nation was founded. The willingness of Congress to focus on the pernicious influences impacting our children, the willingness of the American people to demand that those profiteering at the expense of our culture and our young people be reined in, will largely shape the future of our Nation.

Terrorism is an ever-present threat, the economy is of concern, and natural disasters like Hurricane Katrina are a tremendous threat to us. However, terrorism, economic distress and natural disasters will not prevail as long as our national character is sound. We are engaged in a cultural and spiritual struggle of huge proportions, and I can only hope that the principles upon which this Nation was founded remain pre-eminent.

As Congress addresses important issues such as those that I have mentioned, it is critical that we not lose sight of the fact that our Nation's survival is directly linked to the character of our people; and I would urge Congress to think about these things and particularly to try to guard the future for our young people, because the future of this Nation is our young people. If we continue to let some of these pernicious influences that we now see impacting them so greatly continue, it may certainly render us one of those nations that become somewhat like Rome, like Great Britain, and also like we have seen with the Soviet Union. So it is important that we be vigilant.

ENERGY INDEPENDENCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KUHLMAN of New York). Under a previous

order of the House, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I listened to the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. OSBORNE), and I wish to just add that many times people find their families breaking apart and experience a sense of hopelessness because of the pressures that come to bear.

□ 2045

It is not that they necessarily have bad character, but, in fact, very bad things happen to them. And in fact, Hurricane Katrina showed us in another way how America's overdependence on imported petroleum leaves our families more economically vulnerable and leaves America strategically more vulnerable to shortages or other market disruptions.

If we look in the past year of 2004, the five major U.S. oil companies, Exxon, British Petroleum, Shell, Chevron, and Conoco, have almost tripled their profits from 2002, taking in over \$50 billion more than they did just 2 years before. And guess where those dollars came from? Right out of our pockets, putting greater pressures on family life. In 2005, after months of suspected price gouging, these five major oil companies are on target to pocket over \$100 billion more, nearly \$40 billion more than Congress has appropriated so far to rebuild the entirety of our devastated Gulf Coast, which has taken generations to build. That is how much money these big companies are making.

According to the September 1 Wall Street Journal article, unleaded gasoline prices surged 36 percent in just 3 days, pushing the wholesale price to 132 percent above 1 year ago. This massive increase occurred despite the fact that in the same 3-day period, the price of crude oil went up just 4.25 percent. Over the past year, crude oil prices have gone up 64 percent. So that means the wholesale price of gasoline jumped nine times as fast as the price of crude in 3 days and is running more than double the increase of crude over the past year; and these companies are gaining a windfall benefit.

According to information provided by the Congressional Research Service, we suffered a gasoline shortage of 13 percent as a result of Hurricane Katrina. But in 2004, according to a Congressional Research study, 2.5 percent of motor fuel usage in our country came from ethanol, a fuel produced here at home. If we had moved to providing 10 percent of our fuel from ethanol, as some States like Minnesota do, we would have been able to replace more than half of this shortfall with ethanol and put the money in the pockets of our own farmers rather than dictators and kings over whom we have almost no control.

As of today, there are about 5 million vehicles on the road that will run on 85 percent ethanol, but most people do not know it, and it is very difficult to